

High School Social Studies Curriculum American Government/Grade 12

Description:

Twelfth grade social studies will focus on American Government. This class will provide students the opportunity to learn about the government of the United States at the federal, state, and local levels. Students will explore the purpose of government and will examine how various governments meet the needs of the people. Students will examine the duties, responsibilities, and individual roles of citizens in a democracy, as well as prepare them to become contributing members of American society.

	H I S T O R I C A L		G E O G R A P H Y	U.S. CONSTITUTION		G O V E R N M E N T		C U L T U R E	
				RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES					
				AMERICAN POLITICS					
			A N D					A N D	
	P E R S P E C T I V E S		E C O N O M I C S	LEGISLATIVE BRANCH		A N D		S O C I E T Y	
				EXECUTIVE BRANCH		C I V I C S			
				JUDICIAL BRANCH					
				STATE AND LOCAL					

Course Questions:

Our primary goal of this course is to help students discover the tools, processes, methods, and techniques to think as an informed citizen. To achieve this, the following course-long questions were designed to be considered through all units of study:

- a) How do present events and future decisions help shape government to meet the needs of the people?
- b) How does the organization of the United States government allow for the protection of democratic principles?
- c) How does the study of government allow for the resolution of conflict and the development of tolerance for other ideas?

Essential Questions	Connections to Program of Studies and Core Content	Content	Suggested Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is government and why is it needed? How can we as a people solve the problems of modern society to make the world a better place for future generations and ourselves? 	<p><i>Program of Studies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will recognize government forms develop over time Governments can be evaluated by their effectiveness Students will understand the foundations of American democracy Students will recognize various systems and institutions Students can analyze how the government deals with basic economic principles Students will understand the basic forms of government Students will analyze how cultures and beliefs are reflected in government Understand the problem of scarcity must be addressed by all nations. Recognize that economic systems are created by individuals and societies to achieve broad goals. <p><i>Core Content:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Principles of limited government (ex. Rule of law, federalism, etc..) protect individual rights and promote the common good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic forms of government (types of democracy, totalitarianism, etc.) Basic forms of economies (capitalism, socialism, communism) Purpose of government and how government reflects the needs of the people Origins of American government Apply democratic principles to real life situations How various governments analyze issues and relate rights and responsibilities to its citizens. 	<p><i>Students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will research different types of government including their basis of power and ability to accomplish goals. Students will create a government that will address the needs of a hypothetical population and present it to the class. Students will then create skits to show what life would be like in that environment. Create models representing issues from a variety of governmental perspectives. Write an article for a journal: Which forms of government best meet the needs of the people? (Writing Portfolio - Transactive) Using the Internet research the different forms of government around the world. Write a feature article comparing lives of people in the U.S. and how it differs from life in China. (Writing Portfolio - Transactive)

Essential Questions	Connections to Program of Studies and Core Content	Content	Suggested Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do the principles of the Constitution provide for a more effective or efficient government? Thinking back to the original Constitutional principles, would the founding fathers be surprised by the changes in their government over the last 200 years? Was our government created to protect us from ourselves? 	<p><i>Program of Studies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand foundations of U.S. democratic form of Government Recognize how U.S. government has changed over time to meet the needs of society. Recognize that the U.S. Constitution established a government of limited powers that are shared among different levels and branches. Recognize that the U.S. has a market economy which is determined by the forces of supply and demand. <p><i>Core Content:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governments derive their power from different sources. Democratic governments preserve and protect the rights and liberties of their constituents through different sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Origins of American democracy (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Constitutional Convention etc.) Contributions of political philosophers: Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Adam Smith Limited Government, Constitutional supremacy, rule of law, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, adaptability, civil liberties, capitalism, change, basic assumptions 	<p><i>Students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and participate in a mock Constitutional convention Conduct a Constitutional search to find how the Constitution addresses the weaknesses on the Articles of Confederation. Research political philosophers and write a quote consistent with their perspective. Present this to the class and the other groups will determine the principle that is being addressed. Create a timeline of events effecting Constitutional influences Research using the Internet and newspaper articles to find information that deal swith Constitutional principles. Create political cartoons or editorials reflective of the development of Constitutional government. Debate from Federalist/ Anti-Federalist perspective.

Essential Questions	Connections to Program of Studies and Core Content	Content	Suggested Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Even in a democracy are rights relative or absolute? 2. What connection do rights have to a successful democracy? 3. How does our Constitution protect rights? 	<p><i>Program of Studies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how forms of government view and interact with various cultures. • Understand the democratic principles of liberty, justice, individual human dignity, the rules of law, and how they relate to society. • Analyze the importance of rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society. <p><i>Core Content:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic governments protect and preserve the rights and liberties of their constituents (U.S. Constitution). • Governments derive their power from different sources (e.g. democracy-its citizens, monarchies-by decree). • People form governments to establish order, provide security, and accomplish goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a right? Law of nature, etc. • Bill of Rights, other Constitutional rights • Civic responsibilities: jury duty, voting etc. • Important Court cases dealing with rights • How changes in society effect the definition of individual rights (ex. Civil rights movement, abortion, wartime rights etc..) • Juvenile rights 	<p><i>Students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide into groups. Each group will be given an amendment to research and present court cases dealing with that amendment. • Simulate court cases that reflect conflicts between individuals and government. • Debate issues revolving rights and the roles of government and the protection of those rights. • Create a cartoon or editorial reflective of these issues. • View documentary and films related to this unit. • Interpret an Amendment and perform a skit displaying what life would be like without that Amendment. • Listen to guest speakers discuss individual rights. • Interpret quotes from philosophers and writers regarding responsibilities and determine if these are necessary responsibilities for life in a democracy.

Essential Questions	Connections to Program of Studies and Core Content	Content	Suggested Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does the current political system allow for the best representation possible? What are the elements of “good participation” in a healthy democracy? All things considered can voters make final decisions to do what is best for society? 	<p><i>Program of Studies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students understand how technology has helped or hindered the operation of American government. Students understand democratic principles and their roles in the political process Analyze roles of political parties and citizen participation in a democratic society. Recognize that the U.S. Constitution contains few economic guidelines therefore economic policies are determined by elected officials. Understand that voters influence economic policy and decision making through the representatives they elect. <p><i>Core Content:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students understand how principles and decisions have consequences in their daily living. Students understand that their involvement influences laws and government mandates. Students can analyze issues that relate to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy and their involvement in government All citizens have a civic duty to be responsible members in a democratic society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding citizenship rights and responsibilities. Rise and stance of current political parties as well as importance of third parties. Understanding the nomination process (political process): Announcement, conventions and primaries, national convention, party ticket and platform Understanding the election process: general election, electoral college, inauguration Influence of media, polls, technologies influence on political system, and interest groups 	<p><i>Students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform a mock political conventions Perform a mock election Simulate the role of the electoral college Create charts that reflect the impact of the electoral college. Write an editorial concerning the validity of the electoral college. (Writing Portfolio - Transactive) Research the development of political parties. Debate current issues from the perspective of the political parties, or interest groups. Participate in a voter registration drive. Write letters to political candidates addressing their stand on particular issues. (Writing Portfolio - Transactive) Write an academic essay: Does the current political system allow the U.S. to achieve the best representation possible? Or does your vote really count? View and analyze documentaries and other films regarding the political process. Participate in the collection of exit poll data.

Course/Grade: **U.S. Government**

Unit: **U.S. Political Process**

Suggested Length: **5 Weeks**

Essential Questions	Connections to Program of Studies and Core Content	Content	Suggested Activities
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Essential Questions	Connections to Program of Studies and Core Content	Content	Suggested Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would our founding fathers believe our government has overstepped its bounds? 2. How do the people in the legislative branch and the process they use to create laws, meet the needs of the people? 	<p><i>Program of Studies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will understand how the U.S. government regulates natural and human resources. • Students will understand ways in which the government is involved in its economy. • Students will examine how government and society work together to meet the needs of the people. • Students will understand how democratic governments protect the rights of their constituents through lawmaking. • Students will be able to describe how the government responds to contemporary issues and societal problems. • Students will understand that the government responds to the human needs structure society, and influence behavior of the public. • Understand political decisions effect political boundaries at local, state, and national levels (census). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article I : Bi-Cameralism, House of Representatives, Senate, elections, privileges of Congressmen, compensation, legislative process, powers of Congress, Powers denied national government, powers denied to state governments 	<p><i>Students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research a problem and write letters to Congress expressing their and asking for action. • Determine if the sociological make-up of Congress is a fair representation of society. Students will extend this by writing an academic essay. • Determine from a list of powers, which are expressed, implied or inherent. • Research party make-up and leadership roles in Congress, as well as how their representatives vote on important issues. • Simulate the legislative process. • Divide the book <u>Profiles in Courage</u> into 8 sections. Divide the class into 8 groups and each group will present why that Senator was an important part of American History. • Use the Internet or other primary sources to list and rank the top 10 bills of the year and justify their importance.

Essential Questions	Connections to Program of Studies and Core Content	Content	Suggested Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compared to the original goal of the framers, has the President overstepped his bounds? 2. Do Americans expect too much today from the President? 3. How does the President organize the executive branch in order to meet all his/her duties and roles? 	<p><i>Program of Studies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how U.S. Government regulates natural and human resources • Analyze how technology has helped or hindered the operation of government. • Understand how the role of the U.S. government and economic system has changed over time to meet the needs of society. • Examine how governments and their societies work together to establish social institutions to meet the needs of the people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article II • Make-up of the executive branch • Presidential election process • Powers of the president • Duties and roles of the president • Checks on the executive branch • Succession of the presidency • Executive bureaucracy (independent agencies, cabinet) • Development of foreign policy 	<p><i>Students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a mock presidential election. • Create their own hypothetical candidate, based on civic virtue, background, and personality characteristics. • Use the Internet and other resources to analyze background of past presidents and present their impact on the country, presidency, or world. • Write a feature article analyzing who was the most influential president, and why. (Writing Portfolio - Transactive) • Make presentations focusing on the roles of the president. • Participate in a role play activity in which they are to react to historical scenarios of historical significance and then analyze the actual response. • Compare/ contrast famous inauguration addresses to what they were actually able to accomplish. • Write a feature article about an event going on in the world today and how the U.S. is responding. (Writing Portfolio - Transactive) • Use a world map to research ten “hot spots”, and locate them on a map. They will present to the class how the UN or U.S. government is using its structure to deal with these problems.

Essential Questions	Connections to Program of Studies and Core Content	Content	Suggested Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do the courts balance the rights of society v. the rights of the individual? What impact have judicial decisions had on society? How has the judicial branch adapted to society? 	<p><i>Program of Studies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will recognize how the government has changed over time to meet the needs of society. (court cases) Examine how governments and their societies work together to address the needs of the people. Students will see how democracy views and interacts with various cultures. The rights of the individual may be in conflict with the goals of the government, or the rights of another individual. Recognize various regions in the U.S. and understand how their local and state governments may operate differently because of regional needs and differences. Recognize that the Const. established a government of limited powers shared among different levels and branches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article III Make-up of court federal and state court system and responsibilities Appointment of justices Judicial review Important Supreme Court cases (Civil rights etc.) Criminal and Civil Law Adversary system Original v. appellate jurisdiction Judicial restraint v. Judicial activism Adaptability 	<p><i>Students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present Supreme Court cases allowing the class to be the Supreme court to decide the cases and then analyzing the resulting precedent. Listen to guest speakers that discuss the court system and differences between criminal and civil law. Conduct on-line researching for current Kentucky Supreme Court cases. Chart and graph the differences between state and federal courts. Take a field trip to watch court in action and visit the jail. Watch videotapes of the Civil and Criminal trials of OJ Simpson and make conclusions comparing civil v. criminal cases. Role play the President and pick a Supreme Court member.

Essential Questions	Connections to Program of Studies and Core Content	Content	Suggested Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why do we need state and local government? How do they meet the needs of the people? What are the roles of the different levels of state government? 	<p><i>Program of Studies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will recognize regions and how their local and state governments operate differently because of regional needs and differences. Students will recognize the Constitution has established a government that must share its powers among different levels. Students will examine how local governments work together with the federal government to address the needs of the people. Analyze how decisions on the distribution of resources can be made by local, state, and/or federal levels of government. <p><i>Core Content:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government responds to local human needs. Federal, state, and local governments have limited budgets so they must compare revenues to cost when planning public projects. Natural disasters may effect decisions relative to human activities (building codes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concept of federalism Roles of state branches Various forms of local governments Levels of state government: state, county, local Powers denied to states and 9th and 10th amendments State revenues State expenses Local issues 	<p><i>Students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to guest speakers from state and local government Conduct interviews with local government officials and analyze the way in which this position addresses the needs of the people. Research a local problem and address how state and local government can propose solutions to this problem in the form of a feature article. (Writing Portfolio - Transactive) Interview local business leaders who explain the impact local laws have on their businesses. Examine the previous year's budget and prioritize where the expenditures should be made.